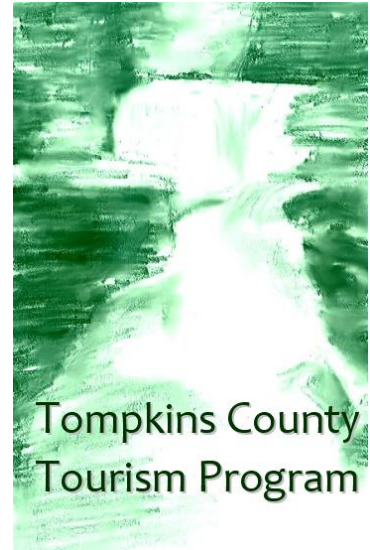


COVER PAGE

2015 Budget Request Form

Tompkins County Tourism Program



I. BASIC INFORMATION

Program: Discovery Trail

Applicant Organization: Discovery Trail

Contact Person: Nancy Grossman

Phone: 607.351.1505 Email: ngrossman@discoverytrail.com

2015 Request: \$36,055.00 Product Development or Marketing? Marketing

Year	Tourism Program Allocation**	\$ Change	% Change	% of Program Budget*
2010	35,734.00	-1,881.00	-5%	23% overall and 71% marketing and admin
2011	35,734.00	0	0	Same as 2010
2012	36,270.00	536.00	1.5%	22% overall and 70% marketing and admin
2013	36,270.00	0	0	Same as 2012
2014	37,360.00	1,090.00	3%	20% overall and 66% marketing and admin
Request 2015	36,055.00	1,005.00	-3.5%	14% overall and 66% marketing and admin

* Enter the % of the total program budget that would come from the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

** Enter modified budget amounts where applicable.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Describe the program in two or three sentences.

The Discovery Trail is a collaborative of eight Tompkins County attractions, including seven museums and the TC Public Library. The Discovery Trail pools its resources, including annual member contributions of \$18,500 plus \$24,525 of in-kind support in 2014, to co-promote the member organizations, and thereby extends its marketing reach beyond what each organization could do individually.

III. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Very briefly state overarching challenges and opportunities related to your program (current or anticipated in 2015) and describe you how propose to address them.

Challenges: Based on input from our marketing committee we made the decision to overhaul our website in 2014 to a responsive design which will accommodate all the different platforms (smart phones, iPads, etc.) potential visitors use to access information. This decision decreased the amount of funds for other print and on-line advertising opportunities. However we feel this is a necessary step to make our website more accessible. More details in budget narrative.

Opportunities: The Discovery Trail is an incredible product. We have eight international quality educational institutions providing rich and engaging experiences to all ages every season of the year. This wide range of appeal offers us endless marketing opportunities to engage visitors.

IV. BUDGET NARRATIVE

Describe how you propose to use the requested funds. You may also use this section to expand on your answers to questions II and III.

The Discovery Trail's annual budget is organized by program budgets.

We have a separate budget for administration and marketing and separate program budgets for our two school programs in Ithaca and Trumansburg. The Discovery Trail's marketing efforts are tracked separately from the other DT expenses.

After a 23% increase in member dues in 2013 no increases were included for 2014. We also computed in-kind DT partner support for 2014 at \$24,525 for DT directors, marketing committee, and DT Chair time.

With the available marketing funds for 2014 we choose to increase the web design allocation from the proposed 2014 budget. The cost, estimated at \$6,500, will be deducted from the advertising line of \$16,000. Then we plan to also use funds from the advertising line of \$16,000 on Search Engine Optimizing to increase our unique web visitors.

In 2015, the requested funds will be used to increase promotion of Discovery Trail offerings to potential out of area visitors with the goal of extended overnight stays in Tompkins County using more web based platforms. We will also reprint brochures and conduct our biannual visitor survey. Our plans are outlined in the program goals section.

V. PROGRAM GOALS

List and describe program goals for 2015, using the sample format. For each goal listed, describe how you will measure achievement of that goal (you may list more than one measure of achievement for each goal). This will require you to consider appropriate numerical measures and baselines.

Also, which goals and critical actions of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan does this program respond to, and how do your proposed program goals align with goals stated in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan?

The Discovery Trail plans to continue with our successful initiatives and make adjustments in 2015 to include more social media, search optimizing, continue our *What's Hot* campaign and increase attendance and name recognition. We feel the Discovery Trail is a positive investment for the Tourism Program. Our marketing initiatives correspond with the growing use of the internet for travel planning and majority of Tompkins County tourists in the age range of 45-64 years as outlined in the Chmura Report.

Our planned expansion of *Kids Discover the Trail!*, the Discovery Trail's educational program, from Ithaca and Trumansburg districts to include the remaining four districts in Tompkins County mirrors a STPB Tourism goal of improving the quality of life for local residents. Groton grade 5 students are participating in June 2014 and we are working with the remaining districts with the hope of bringing them on board with pilot programs during the 2014-15 school year. While *KDT!* is an important part of what the Discovery Trail does as an organization, *KDT!* is a separate program from marketing. As noted in section IV *KDT!* is funded separately and Tourism Program funds are not used.

2015 Program Goals:

Goal 1: The Discovery Trail will continue to improve the use of tracking and analytics in our marketing planning.

Measure of Achievement: We are using analytics and cost per impression data to determine the success of our advertising vehicles. We will analyze data from 2013 to 2014 to determine changes in data.

Narrative: We plan to increase the use of analytics offered by Facebook and Google and our QR coding as we focus on specific geographic regions, age groups and interests. As we drill into this data the information we acquire will allow us to make the most of our advertising decisions and then have the best rate of return with our advertising dollars. In addition, we track the number of brochures distributed with our contracted suppliers. In 2013, 26,700 brochures were distributed with Brochures Unlimited. We saw an increase of 7,000 brochures from 2011 to 2012 and then a consistent rate from 2012 to 2013.

Goal 2: To continue with the *What's Hot* campaign in 2014 and 2015.

Measure of Achievement: To determine the *What's Hot* campaign success we will review data from 2013 to 2014 to determine the change in unique visitors, page views, as well as traffic sources. For example the October features are Halloween events at the Sciencenter and Museum of the Earth and we can determine the change in the above noted analytics.

Narrative: In 2013 we focused on the greater Rochester area and after reviewing data we did not see any measureable increase in unique views from Rochester between 2012 and 2013. For 2014 we are focusing on a larger market instead of a specific city.

The *What's Hot* campaign is an integrated approach to marketing specific events and exhibits at DT sites and is a change from our past focus of marketing the DT as one product. We started in 2013 by selecting two items per month as a feature. When the event is featured in 2014, for example the Moog Exhibition at The History Center, we have a cover photo on Facebook, photo and text on the CVB's feature listing, and photo and text on the *What's Hot* page on www.discoverytrail.com that all focus on this specific event or exhibition. Based on strong referral data from Google Analytics we've expanded our buy for web banner ads with Fingerlakes Tourism Alliance and the monthly banners now focus on a What's Hot feature for that month.

This program aligns with the goals stated in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan to "develop Ithaca and Tompkins County as a central arts, cultural and heritage tourism destination in the Finger Lakes" and to "increase educational tourism".

Goal 3: Attendance and Name Recognition

Continue to increase visitor attendance to our sites by 5% annually.

Measure of Achievement: We conducted our biannual visitor survey in 2013 and goals for 2014 and 2015 are based on this data.

- Increase total attendance at the eight Discovery Trail sites by 5% for 2015. Attendance increased by 6% from 718,088 in 2012 to 761,203 in 2013.
- Increase out-of-county name recognition of Discovery Trail by 5%, based on 26% in 2013.
- Increase in-county name recognition of Discovery Trail by 5%, based on 56% in 2013.

Narrative: A goal of the Discovery Trail is to continue to increase our out-of-area visitation and name recognition by in and out of county attendees. Data from the 2013 visitor survey demonstrates the importance of both local and out of area visitors being familiar with the Discovery Trail. When compared to 2011 findings, those in groups with only non-residents report a much higher awareness from referrals from friends/family (30% in 2013 vs. 20% in 2011) or the web or other technological sources (18% in 2013 vs. 11% in 2011; largely driven by mentions of Google specifically – 8% in 2013 vs. 2% in 2011).

In 2013, 70% of visitors surveyed had previously visited Tompkins County. For those who live in the area, it is difficult to pinpoint a precise source of awareness about the site they were visiting (42% just know of it on their own – 25% from living, working or going to school here, 12% from driving by, 4% from having visited the site before, etc.). Instead, referrals (primarily from friends/family) seem to be on the rise (31% in 2013 vs. 20% in 2011) as the way in which visitors primarily became aware of the site where they were surveyed. Based on this number we decided to add back print advertising with the Ithaca Child publications in 2014 and added advertising in all of the seasonal Ithaca Times guides to reach new arrivals and continue to build awareness in Tompkins and surrounding counties.

VI. ACHIEVEMENTS

Please describe your most significant program achievements during 2013 and the first quarter (January through March) of 2014. If possible, please use this as an opportunity to restate your program goals for the 2013 and 2014 budget years and describe progress towards these goals.

2013 achievements include:

- ❖ Brochure exchanges: Cayuga Lake wine trail, CVB and FLTA
- ❖ 2013 visitor survey – full report posted at <http://discoverytrail.com/discovering/mission.php>. Data from the survey such as which sites visitors are most likely to visit were part of updating all of our suggested itineraries which were revised as part of the website work in 2014. For example, the Outdoor Enthusiasts itinerary recommends Sciencenter visitors also visit the Cayuga Nature Center based on the survey data.
- ❖ 2013 brochure update and reprint
Brochure distribution with Brochures Unlimited, Fingerlakes Tourism Alliance, Grapevine Distribution, Ithaca Mall, Gateway Info Center, Preble Visitor Center and 1,000 Islands Tourism Council.
- ❖ Goodie Bags delivered to 90 front end hotel staff at 11 local properties. Bags contained details on each of the eight DT sites plus free admission coupons to sites that charge.
- ❖ Web presence: CVB feature listing full year, monthly event postings (updated weekly) on Edible Fingerlakes, Fingerlakes Tourism Alliance and Life in Fingerlakes and weekly updates to DT events and news on discoverytrail.com and DT Facebook page.
- ❖ What's Hot: work with web designer to create button and page on website and work with graphic designer for monthly cover photo collage.
- ❖ CVB: presenter at staff retreat, monthly feature listings on visithaca.com, enews features, Winter Recess program back cover, TV Commercial featuring Sciencenter and the Museum of the Earth, plus meetings with CVB director and marketing including presentation of visitor survey results.

Visitor Attendance – ACHIEVED

Goal: Increase total attendance at Discovery Trail sites by 3-5%, following the trend of the past five years.

Result: Total DT attendance increased 6% from 2012 to 2013 from 718,088 in 2012 to 718,088 in 2012. This continues the trend of increased attendance which was 5% from 2011 to 2012.

2014 to date achievements include:

- Responsive Design overhaul to DT website going “live” late May 2014
- April 2014: Family Matters in Ithaca Times feature on summer activities at DT sites

2015 on the schedule:

- Spring 2015 – plans to update and reprint brochure
- Summer 2015 – plans to conduct biannual visitor survey

VII. IMPACT OF FUNDING

What would be the specific impact of receiving less funding than you are requesting? For example, what are the things that you would like to be able to do that you would not be able to do? What would be removed or reduced from your plans if you had to make do with less than requested?

Based on the instructions we have submitted a budget with a 3.5% decrease from the 2014 budget. This will result in fewer resources to allocate to our marketing. Since we have plans for the visitor survey and brochure reprint in 2015 the loss will hit print and web advertising.

We expect 2015 staffing to remain the same as 2014. The DT coordinator will be the main person to implement the marketing projects with the assistance of the DT Chair, DT marketing committee and graphic designer from the Lab of Ornithology.

VIII. COLLABORATION

What steps have you taken and/or what new steps do you propose to take to collaborate, coordinate, partner, and share information and resources between your program(s) and other room-tax funded programs?

The Discovery Trail maintains a strong working relationship with the Ithaca CVB through collaboration on marketing campaigns and participation in CVB initiatives such as the Visitithaca.com feature listings, seasonal e-news blasts, bus tour offerings, Star Hospitality offerings, and Winter Recess. The CVB shares their plans and marketing research which helps the Discovery Trail determine the best avenues to pursue to expand the outreach for potential visitors to Tompkins County. Our brochures are a prominent feature in the East Shore and Commons Visitor Centers and the Commons center also features our 27.5" by 71" banner.

We are in the process of finalizing plans for a summer 2014 joint DT advertising venture with WBNG. The joint buy-in will include a 30 second commercial with representation from all 8 locations plus an interview with the DT coordinator and images from each location. WBNG-TV covers 14 counties of the Southern Tier (750k residents) and Action News is on 5 hours daily.

Our 2014 planning included a joint DT exhibition for 2015 however the lead organizer has taken a new position and moved out of state. We will be exploring other joint venture ideas at our next marketing committee meeting.

In addition, the Discovery Trail in and of itself is a collaboration and we are always receptive to other ways to participate in our community.

Discovery Trail

2015 Budget Request - Tompkins County Tourism Program

For previous years budgets, used modified budget amounts.

As noted in the narrative this budget does NOT contain any KDT! expenses

REVENUE		2012 Budget	2013 Actual	2014 Budget	2015 Request	Notes
	TCTP*	\$36,270.00	\$36,270.00	\$37,360.00	\$36,055.00	
	DT Member Dues	\$14,920.00	\$17,289.65	\$18,600.00	\$18,500.00	
	SUBTOTAL	\$51,190.00	\$53,559.65	\$55,960.00	\$54,555.00	
	TOTAL REVENUES	\$51,190.00	\$53,559.65	\$55,960.00	\$54,555.00	
	TOTAL TCTP*	\$36,270.00	\$36,270.00	\$37,360.00	\$36,055.00	
	TCTP Share	70.9%	67.7%	66.8%	66.1%	
EXPENSES						
	Advertising - DM	\$14,460.00	\$12,690.00	\$16,600.00	\$15,195.00	Print and Web
	Visitor Survey - DM	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
	Brochure					
	Reprint/design - DM	\$4,000.00	\$4,809.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	
	Brochure					
	Distribution - DM	\$5,000.00	\$5,465.50	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	includes shipping brochure distribu
	Web					
	Design/Hosting - DM	\$400.00	\$515.00	\$450.00	\$450.00	
	Local advertising & fliers - DA & DM	\$2,920.00	\$1,740.00	\$1,885.00	\$1,885.00	
	Maps - DM	\$540.00	\$499.00	\$550.00	\$550.00	
	Professional Fees - DA & DM	\$1,800.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	annual audit
	Accounting - LAP - DA & DM	\$0.00	\$887.50	\$900.00	\$900.00	
	Coordinator - federal taxes - DA & DM	\$0.00	\$1,325.68	\$1,555.00	\$1,555.00	
	Coordinator wages - administration - DA	\$10,200.00	\$11,943.00	\$10,520.00	\$10,520.00	
	Coordinator - marketing - DM	\$8,870.00	\$9,285.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	
	SUBTOTAL	\$51,190.00	\$53,559.68	\$55,960.00	\$54,555.00	
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$51,190.00	\$53,559.68	\$55,960.00	\$54,555.00	
	TOTAL TCTP*	\$36,270.00	\$36,270.00	\$37,360.00	\$36,055.00	
	TCTP share	70.9%	67.7%	66.8%	66.1%	
	REVENUES LESS EXPENSES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

*TCTP-Tompkins County Tourism Program

Note: expenses for overall DT administration are noted with a DA & marketing expenses with a DM.

2015 Budget Request – Tompkins County Tourism Program
Email to tknipe@tompkins-co.org by 5/21/13, 11am

